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ANNEX 16

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BRITISH EMBASSY,
WASHINGTON, D. C.

September 16th, 1947

My dear Under Secretary:

Mr. Bevin asks me to thank you for the reply, which has now been delivered to him by the United States Ambassador in London, to his proposal for an informal review by our two Governments of our policy in the Near and Middle East. Mr. Bevin welcomes your general agreement with his proposal.

I understand, however, that the State Department suggested that these conversations should begin as soon as possible and should be in two stages: first, military discussions to take place in Washington, and second, high-level political discussions at a place to be commonly agreed. On this point Mr. Bevin asks me to explain to you that he is doubtful of the desirability of starting these discussions on a purely military footing since our object is to coordinate policy over the whole area, taking into consideration political and economic implications as well as military. He thinks, therefore, that valuable time would be lost and nothing much gained by purely military preliminary talks. He suggests that the first stage should be discussions between our political and military experts, who would prepare recommendations for submission to Mr. Marshall and himself. Mr. Bevin will not be going to New York for the General Assembly of the United Nations and his first opportunity of seeing Mr. Marshall will therefore be at the Meeting of the Council of Foreign Ministers in London. As you know, it is now tentatively proposed that this meeting should begin on the 25th November.

Mr. Bevin proposes that I should lead the British side in the initial informal talks and that I should be assisted by a senior officer of the Foreign Office and representatives of the British Chiefs of Staff. His Majesty's Government in the United Kingdom expect to be ready to begin the conversations early in October.

I should be grateful if you could let me know whether Mr. Bevin's proposals are acceptable to the United States Government.

Mr. Bevin wishes me to say that he is sure that the State Department will agree that the utmost secrecy should be observed regarding these proposed discussions.

Yours sincerely,

INVERCHAPEL

The Honourable
Robert A. Lovett,
Under Secretary of State of
the United States.